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Dear Friends,

Please enjoy this latest edition of Kid Lit News! It is the product of months of hard work by our newsletter staff, an amazing team!

I must give special thanks and recognition to RM Rivera, our tireless, passionate driving force. Without her, Kid Lit News would not exist, let alone be the work of art that it is. Gratitude doesn’t sum it up enough—but I declare mine nevertheless, along with my love.

Speaking of love, there’s much to love about this issue. Let us know what you think! We also welcome programming suggestions. Write to us at, longislandny@scbwi.org.

May you bask in summer sunshine, taking care to create each day.

Yours in Kidlit and Kidart,
Selene Castrovilla
SCBWI LI RA

Selene Castrovilla is the Regional Advisor for the SCBWI Long Island Chapter. She is an award-winning author of picture books and YA novels. She has an MFA from the New School in New York City. “Selene is a writer worth watching,” said Jacqueline Woodson, 2018 Newbery Honor Winner. https://selenecastrovilla.com/
Kid LIt News is here with an interview with our cover artist, is a longtime member and freshly minted PAL member—Deborah Cuneo. Deborah jumped at the opportunity to illustrate our cover and created a cover featuring summer fun on the beaches of Long Island.

Growing up in a family of “creatives,” Deborah enjoyed a childhood that gave her unlimited access to an endless amount of traditional and not-so-traditional art supplies and creative opportunities. Today, Deborah continues to build on that foundation by using a variety of techniques and tools in combination with traditional and contemporary art media to create her illustrations.


In addition to children’s book illustration, Deborah creates artwork on anything that can be painted on or printed on, including wall art, stationery and invitations.

She also enjoys working with different textiles to create quilts and fiber art. Deborah is a member of SCBWI, LICWI, and CBIG. She lives on Long Island with her family, which includes a cat, named Sketch, and a dog, named Luna.

**Can you tell us your inspiration for your Kid LIt cover design?**
Growing up on the island was my inspiration! Although I was born in Brooklyn, I’ve lived on
Long Island since I was six, so beaches, boats, and lighthouses were a huge part of my childhood. Because we always lived so close to the water, we spent a ton of time on our boat. Often times, I would come off the school bus and would be greeted by “the big cooler” packed with dinner. As soon as my father got home from work, we all piled in the car, drove down to the boat, and headed out on the water to have dinner. We did this a few times a week from early spring until late fall, weather permitting.

Also, my grandfather had a summer home in Mattituck for a few years, so on the last day of school, we’d load up our belongings (including the boat!) and move out east for the summer, returning home on Labor Day. The house was a few hundred feet up the block from a boatyard and a very short drive from the beach. We were always either boating on the sound, at the beach, or exploring the three farms (horse, potato, and apple orchard) that stacked up, side by side, starting at our backyard. I still remember waking up those summer mornings to the scent of salty sea water mixed with the sweet smell of the honeysuckle and blackberries from the bushes that lined our driveway. Good times, good times!

What is your creative process? Schedule, studio, work ethic, favorite media, etc.?  
Schedule, studio and work ethic? This is a tough one. My schedule varies based on whether I’m teaching during the school year or not. I taught art for quite a few years and then took a break from it to pursue more freelance work. An amazing opportunity was presented to me last year, so I went back to teaching art again. But whether I’m working full time illustrating or juggling teaching and illustrating, I’ve always been very disciplined about my time management. I had a great example to learn from. My parents ran a business, which was home based when we were young. They were very successful and it was a direct result of their incredibly disciplined work ethic, which they passed on to my sister and me. I’m also a bit of a workaholic, so that helps!

My favorite media is—all the media! I truly love experimenting and I do it all the time whether I’m working with the kids at school or illustrating in my home studio. During the school year, I teach art K-12. Working with kids reinforces the whole be creatively fearless thing because they are! They aren't afraid to just go for it, so I have a lot of opportunity to play with different combinations of traditional (and not so traditional) media when I’m coming up with lesson plans for them. During the summer when I’m home more often, I will schedule a day or two and just play in my studio. Sometimes, I’ll even take a creative class in a medium that is totally unrelated to illustrating. The experience always seems to inform my illustrative work in a positive way. Creating for creativity’s sake is important to keep my sanity and continue to learn
and grow as an artist.

For my creative process, I always start with the rough sketch (some rougher than others). Then I create a refined sketch by drawing all the different elements separately and scanning them into Photoshop. At that point, I use the tools in Photoshop to create my “Frankensketch.”

Once I have the final sketch nailed down, I isolate each of the items and begin to paint the image with whatever I have prepared to use for the color. Sometimes I'll paint them traditionally and scan them in as is, sometimes it's textures or patterns I've created, and sometimes I'll create a few brushes and use those. Really, anything goes. There are no hard and fast rules to how I create the painting. It's really just whatever the sketch inspires me to do. The one thing I am always consistent with is if there are elements that are present throughout a book (a main character, a supporting character, scenery, etc), I will work on all of them at once for consistency's sake. When everything is painted I put it all back together for a finished piece.

Any memorable mentors or inspirational writers or illustrators?

There have been so many along this journey, way too many to list, but I have to say there is one standout, someone that inspired me from the beginning to be creatively fearless in all areas. It was my grandfather, Maurice. Aside from being the best grandfather any child could hope for, he was a teacher, sailor, writer, painter, photographer, woodworker, and all around creative! He embraced every opportunity to create, learn and then shared it with anyone that was willing to receive it (and I was all too happy to). It was all his original children's stories he'd tell that initially inspired me to someday write my own. I still think of him often!

On your blog you mention that your debut PB, *Little Dragon and the New Baby*, was spawned at a NJ SCBWI Conference. Can you tell us more about your journey to publication?

It was actually started close to fifteen years ago, inspired by an illustration I did of a duck dressed as a dragon on top of a giant egg. That little dragon duck evolved over the years and
eventually became just a dragon and he showed up in quite a few different illustrations, but the story wasn’t fully fleshed out until...

A couple of years ago, I signed up for the NJSCBWI conference like I always did, but this time, I impulsively decided to take the leap and sign up for the one on one with an editor. I figured I could use this opportunity to force my writing hand and get some much needed feedback from an industry professional. With a submission deadline quickly approaching, I had to come up with the rest of the story and fast. Although this definitely fell into the category of “what the heck was I thinking,” I pulled it together and wrote the story visually, and then submitted, via email, the virtual equivalent of a storyboard roughed out on a paper towel, for critique. So much for me honing my writing skills.

Conference day came and I went to my One-on-one with Julie Matysik, senior editor at Sky Pony Press. She totally shocked me and told me she loved it. I almost fell off my chair! We spoke a bit more and I showed her some new color character sketches that I worked up for the meeting. She took everything to show to her boss and not too long after that she offered me a contract. The whole thing still seems surreal as I write this.

I did a series of three short blog posts detailing the journey, with some pictures of how the character evolved over the years. It’s called “The Evolution of a Little Dragon.” I also did one after publication called “It Really Does Take a Village.” If you’re interested, here are the links:

http://drawntopicturebooks.blogspot.com/p/test-bios.html
http://deborahcuneo.blogspot.com/2016/02/the-evolution-of-little-dragon-part-1.html
http://deborahcuneo.blogspot.com/2016/02/the-evolution-of-little-dragon-the-end.html

Do you have a favorite piece of art you created?
My favorite piece is usually always my last. My current favorite is a piece I did for the NJ SCBWI Conference Illustrator Intensive this year. I had the pleasure of working with Laurent Lin from Simon and Schuster, who provided the prompt “Kaszu’s home was unlike any other. So special. So unique! But Kaszu did not belong there.” I did the rough sketch and submitted it, via
email, for critique. Laurent really loved the character and the point of view in the sketch (minus a slight technical issue with the perspective, oops!) but he felt that while it was definitely unusual for a baby emu to be living in someone’s home, the environment needed to be more relatable for kids. He made a really good point and after I thought about it for a bit, I landed on the candy store theme. This illustration stretched me on many levels, but I really liked the way it came out. It was a lot of fun to work on too!

Do you prefer to work on your own stuff or do contract work?
They both have their positives and their challenges, but honestly, I just prefer to be always working on something. No preference really.

Anything you are working on now that you can tell us about?
I am currently working on story boarding and providing some color samples for a children's television show pitch. I really can't give the details, but the client is lovely and it's by far my most interesting job yet! Regarding my own projects, I have a couple of picture books and a graphic novel in various stages of development.

Any advice you care to share with newbies (or seasoned professionals)?
Create often and be creatively fearless. Be open to critique. Always be open to learning and evolving. Help each other along the way—this is a tough and sometimes frustrating journey, a little kindness goes a long way! Be professional. Hold yourself accountable for your time and for your behavior. Try not to take yourself too seriously, and remember, in the end, don't take anything too personally. It's just business. But above all else, be grateful for both the good and the bad along the way. There is value in each!

Now tell us about the real you. What is your favorite book, movie, food, color, animal, pet, thing to do to relax?
Wow, OK: The Secret Life of Bees by Sue Monk Kidd, any Pixar movie, coffee (isn't that a food ?), apple green, ALL the animals, all the dogs and cats I've ever adopted (and some I haven't yet)—and what is this "relax" you speak of? Seriously, I've never been one to kick back and do nothing, but creating relaxes me. Sometimes it's creating with fabric and fibers, sometimes it's with more traditional art media, even creating lesson plans—I just love creating

©Deborah Cuneo
in general. (There, I think I answered them all!)

If you could meet a historic person or character fact or fiction, who would it be and why?
It would definitely be God. I have a lot of questions!

Anything else you care to share?
Just thanks for everything you and your team do for the kid lit people on the island! The new SCBWI LI region has been such a blessing to our area. From the newsletter to the editorial visits and seminars, you guys are working super hard to provide quality programming and opportunity locally and we are all really appreciative of your efforts!

Thank you Deborah for allowing me to interview you. For more information on Deborah and The Little Dragon and the New Baby go to:

Website: www.deborahcuneoillustration.com
Blog: Creating Out Loud deborahcuneo.blogspot.com
Facebook: Deborah Cuneo Illustration
Twitter: @debcuneoart
Instagram: @ataleof2studios

Stephen S. Martin, the “Cat Man,” is your ARA and co-editor/ publisher of Kid Lit News. Stephen operates out of his studio: FanCatStic, Bringing out the Cat in Things. Stephen’s primary focus is on writing picture books, mostly featuring cats. In his spare time he can also be seen flying his antique aircraft over Long Island. Learn more about Stephen at https://www.instagram.com/catsinthings/
Dear Anonymous,

Your example is actually telling. It presents facts. This is great for Sgt. Joe Friday, who needed just the facts of the case, but not for a reader. You want the reader to identify with a character or be intrigued and drawn into the story. Let’s look at your first sentence: “Jeff’s baseball broke the window.” The reader doesn’t know who Jeff and the narrator are or why this is important. The reader has no reason to care. Think about your favorite books and the characters you always wished were real so you could hang out with them. That’s how you want the reader to feel.

Showing creates this. It turns the facts into a scene:

I smacked Jeff’s ball.

He shrieked, “No!”

Glass shattered and a car alarm blared.

He removed his ball from Mom’s new Lexus.

Now we have a hint of setting and some context for Mom’s anger without stating the ball broke the window. It’s inferred, and the broken glass would be illustrated in a picture book. Details like clothing

Dear Debbie,

I have a question about “Show, don’t tell.” I don’t fully understand the principle. For instance, I wrote: “Jeff’s baseball broke the window. Mom stood there angrily. It was an accident, but we stood there trying to figure out what to say.” My critique group said, “You’re showing and not telling.” I hate to bug you, but I would appreciate your advice with examples to help me not to "show" but tell my story. And does this only apply to picture books? Anonymous

(This question was edited for length.)
and where the narrator is would also be shown in art. I cut a sentence about the narrator rounding second for this reason and because it doesn’t add anything to the emotion of the moment. We can imagine how the narrator feels in the scene without that detail.

To continue the scene, I would show what mom says and does and how the narrator reacts. We learn about people from these things. Trust the reader to know she’s angry based on her actions and dialog.

Here’s an example of showing from *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*: “Ron was standing well back and seemed to be fighting the impulse to run.” (Page 100) We know from this that Ron is afraid even though J.K. Rowling never states it outright. In the next book, where she only needs to remind the reader of Ron’s fear, she does state it.

That’s right, sometimes you should tell. Showing uses more words, so don’t show details that are universal or unimportant to the overall story. “Jen got ready for school” could be skipped unless Jen has to attach a prosthetic limb, a robot brushes her teeth for her, or all of her school supplies were stolen by a unicorn. The first two break from what a reader expects and may be the only school prep we need to see. The third is the inciting incident for the story, so you’d provide context for it.

In a picture book, the illustrator will handle a lot of the showing, often adding elements that aren’t in the text. For example, in *Rosie’s Walk* by Pat Hutchins, a fox follows Rosie, a hen, but Rosie never notices. The hungry fox only appears in the images.

Picture book art complements, rather than illustrates, the text. The text gives the illustrator something to work with. Show emotions through action and dialog as you would with any text and include sensory details that can’t be shown in art: texture, sound, flavor, and smell. But remember that illustrations can show emotion too.

Some visual details do deserve mentioning. *Lilly’s Purple Plastic Purse* by Kevin Henkes contains an example. The art
shows the purse, so the color word could be cut. But the word adds to the lyricism of the text and the color matters to Lilly. The word “purple” earns its place in the title and text.

To sum up, a key to good writing is knowing when to show. Showing brings the reader into the story. But every detail must be worth the words you give it, and in picture books, illustrations will cover many. Even a robot who brushes teeth may be a normal fixture in the story world, worth mentioning to establish the world but not worth more than a phrase or sentence. Trust your reader to get it.

Happy writing!

Sincerely,
Debbie

Debbie Vilardi is the Kid Lit News chief copy editor and a global moderator for the SCBWI Blueboards. She is a former teacher of English to speakers of other languages as well as a published poet and picture book author. She writes for book packagers and has written and copy edited for Front Vision, a teen sci-tech magazine produced in China. https://www.debbievilardi.com/
Why am I so very fond of the SCBWI NJ June conference? Because this smaller regional conference offers many opportunities to connect with editors, agents, and art directors as well as workshops to help you hone your craft. My workshop classes seemed to top out at around fifteen people. Another plus for this conference is that it’s accessible by train: the LIRR to Penn and then a NJ train and a short walk to the New Brunswick Hyatt Regency.

What comes with the basic price for this conference? Workshops, Juried Art Show, Portfolio Showcase, and two meals with the faculty member of your choice. This year’s conference offered a decent selection of workshops for illustrators to pick from. The add-ons for additional fees were One-on-ones, Round Tables, an Illustrator Intensives. Personally, I feel that if you’re already committing money and time for a conference, you need to do some of the add-ons. I mean how often do you get the opportunity to sit with an elusive agent, editor, or art director to show your projects and get their opinions?
The 2019 SCBWI NJ Portfolio Showcase and the Juried Art Show. The art was displayed alphabetically. Just happened that fellow SCBWI LI participant, Deborah Cuneo’s artworks was next to mine. Incidentally, the (P) on the name tag means published. Photo: ©Diana Ting Delosh. Art in photo: © Deborah Cuneo, © Diana Ting Delosh

I signed up for: the Juried Art Show, the Portfolio Showcase, Illustrator Intensive with Laurent Linn, Art Director, Simon & Schuster and three one-on-ones with an art rep and two literary agents. My three stand out workshops were the Query Letter session with agents Liza Fleissig from the Liza Royce Agency, and Danielle Burby from the Nelson Literary Agency; the First Page Session with agent, Rachel Orr, from Prospect Agency and editor Kate Prosswimmer, editor of Margaret K. McElderry, an imprint of Simon & Schuster; and Portfolio Building with art rep, Christy Ewers, an art rep from the CAT Agency. Needless to say, I have pages of notes and a direction for both my art and my writing.

Signing up for an Illustrator Intensive means lots of pre-conference work. The prompts were given out when you registered. Pick the prompt that resonates best with you. I loved Laurent Linn’s prompt “Kazu’s home was unlike any other. So special. So unique! But Kazu did not belong.” Sketches were due by April 28. Feedback was received by May 8 and final art finished and e-mailed by May 28. The hard-copy final art was brought to the conference for critique and discussion on June 2. There was other pre-conference work, such as creating new art for the Juried Art Showcase, spiffing up your portfolio, and designing, and ordering new postcards.

Clockwise: Laurent Linn, art director, Kate Prosswimmer, editor, and Christy Ewers, an art representative. ©All rights reserved.
Here’s my Illustrator Intensive Art, for Laurent Linn’s prompt. © Diana Ting Delosh

Authors have their own pre-conference tasks of polishing manuscripts, first pages, and pitches.

After this conference was over, there was one more goody, the Post Conference Submission Info List. This is a list of contact and submission information for all the attending agents, editors, and art directors. By the way, there were ten agents, twelve editors, and two art directors at this conference. The window of submission opportunity ranged from one month to unlimited for one manuscript/project or postcards and art samples for the art directors.

Conference Tips:
• Research the conference faculty and offerings ahead of time and sign up as early as possible.
• During your lunch and dinner with a faculty member, try and sit close to them as the din in the dining room can be deafening.
• Bring snacks and a water bottle to keep you going between workshops and reviews.
• Use the feedback to tighten up your writing and illustration projects so that you can take advantage of all the appropriate conference submission opportunities.
• SCBWI NJ June Conference 2020 is set for June 20 & 21. Start haunting their website in February and March.

Diana Ting Delosh contracted the art bug at the age of two when she first nibbled her way through a box of crayons. Diana’s illustrations have appeared in educational textbooks, e-books, picture books, and kid’s magazines. Her writing has been published by Ladybug and Highlights/High Five Magazines. Diana received the Highlights High Five Pewter Plate for Puzzle Poem in 2008 and the SCBWI Magazine Merit Honor Award for her Illustration art in Ladybug Magazine in 2002. Website: http://dianadelosh.com Twitter: @dtdelosh
You’ve heard of blogs, but do you know what they are and why writers need them? Whether you’re published or unpublished, blogging can help you to reach an audience. A blog provides writers with a platform to display their writing style, voice, and personality.

What is a Blog?

A blog is a site on the internet that a blogger manages. The blogger publishes content through blog posts.

A decade ago, blogs were viewed as online personal diaries that shared the blogger’s thoughts, ideas, and experiences. Though some continue to use blogs for this purpose, blogs have evolved.

Today, many bloggers use their blogs to gain an audience, become influential, and earn income. Unlike commercial companies that have blogs and offer products, services, and advice to their clients, personal blogs add a personal element to the services offered.

Because of the increased popularity of blogs, it’s no surprise there are millions of them on the World Wide Web. Though reports vary, according to SoftwareFindr, at least 400 million blogs exist. Statista states that in the United States alone “In 2015, 28.3 million internet users updated a blog at least once per month. The number of bloggers in the United States is set to reach 31.7 million users in 2020.”

Why an Author Should Have a Blog.

A blog can connect unpublished writers with fans who may become a ready-made market for future books. It also provides another outlet, outside of traditional queries, for agents and editors to find potential authors.
One example of this success is Jill Smokler who founded the parenting site Scary Mommy in 2008. Smokler created her blog to chronicle her life raising kids through the lens of “parenting doesn’t have to be perfect.” Her unapologetic posts on imperfect parenting resonated with parents, catapulting her blog’s popularity. Publishers noticed. In 2012, Galley Books, a division of Simon & Schuster, published *Confessions of a Scary Mommy*. The book featured a collection of Smokler’s blog essays and became a *New York Times* best seller.

A blog allows published authors to engage with fans, thus helping to create a loyal readership. Authors can use their blogs to reinforce their brand which may lead to sales. They can also directly sell their books on their site in addition to through traditional retailers. Authors can use their blogs to announce exciting news, like upcoming tours and books to come. For these reasons, many publishing houses recommend that authors have a blog. Publishing is a business, and publishers want to sell books. Authors who can help them to achieve this goal will stand out.

Authors should make sure their blog contains a balance of promotional and non-promotional posts. Readers don’t want to feel like they’re reading one advertorial after another. Children’s author Grace Lin does a good job of this on her blog. She posts regularly, which keeps readers coming back. While she does list
her books with links to purchase them, she also offers crafts and recipes that relate to her books. This cohesive branding strategy is something publishers look highly upon and readers appreciate.

**Blogging is a Journey**

Creating a popular blog that attracts an audience, including publishers, doesn’t happen overnight. It requires dedication and creativity mixed with strategy and consistency. Stay tuned for more articles in upcoming Kid Lit newsletters where we’ll discuss how to create a blog.

*Maria Adcock is the founder of Bicultural Mama, an award-winning blog covering parenting, culture, food, travel, and health through the lens of a bicultural family. She has appeared on The Dr. Oz Show, Bloomberg News, Newsday, and a YouTube docuseries on Asian food. Maria resides on Long Island with her family. Find her blog at [www.BiculturalMama.com](http://www.BiculturalMama.com) and follow her on [Twitter](http://Twitter), [Facebook](http://Facebook), [Instagram](http://Instagram), and [Pinterest](http://Pinterest).*
Attendees to the 2019 Winter Conference in NYC had the chance to be inspired by industry professionals in a wide array of breakout sessions. Choosing which sessions to attend is always a daunting task, and in the past I have chosen intensives for picture book writing, which is my main focus. But I’ve toyed with the idea of chapter books lately, especially since an editor recently advised me that my picture book submission was more suited for the chapter book audience.

As a result, my first breakout was Writing for Young Readers: Chapter Books and Young Middle Grade Novels, an intensive guided by two editors at Aladdin Books, senior editor Alyson Heller and assistant editor Tricia Lin. Amid the discussion of word count and themes, one gem of advice stood out. Alyson and Lin said that whatever age you are writing for, you need to know your characters inside and out. Interrogate them. Know their favorite things, their fears, their flaws, and the world they live in. Then interrogate yourself. Why this story?

Questioning why I wanted to venture forth into chapter books led me to my next breakout session, Just Do It: Write Here, Right Now, led by author Linda Sue Park and Emma D. Dryden, principal of drydenbks LLC, an editorial and publishing consultancy. Using a series of writing prompts, Emma and Linda Sue had us unleash our imaginations with twelve-minute focused writing sprints. This is a variation of the Pomodoro
Technique, a time management method that is usually twenty-five minutes in length.

Each writing period is called a pomodoro, from the Italian word for tomato, after the tomato-shaped kitchen timer. Linda Sue said she shortened the time for herself to twelve minutes; however, she suggested we go with whichever time commitment was manageable for us. We then had to decide on a writing task and work on it for twelve minutes without looking back to edit. After a three-minute interval, we began another twelve-minute sprint and so on. The point of the pomodoro is to help writers develop the discipline to concentrate on an activity without interruption until the timer rings. In my case, this exercise demonstrated that an overwhelming desire to edit as I write is a pattern I need to work on. It is impossible to free your mind if you’re haunted by future edits as the timer ticks away moments of unbridled inspiration.

My favorite point in the conference came when Linda Sue noted that people often talk about the voice of a story or character, but a working definition of voice is rarely established. “Well, I’m going to define voice for you,” Linda Sue said. “Voice equals word choice plus rhythm. Got it? Voice is your choice of words plus punctuation and sentence length.” She said now we can think of voice in a way we can use. As someone who had always heard of voice described as tone or attitude, this equation resonated with me. It also brought to mind the first time I became aware of voice in a novel. I was in junior high and assigned to read *The Catcher in the Rye*, by J.D. Salinger. When Holden Caulfield said, “Grand. There’s a word I really hate. It’s a phony. I could puke every time I hear it,” I knew exactly who he was.
I will leave you with a writing exercise from Emma and Linda Sue to do as your own pomodoro—Finding the Heart of My Story:

My book is about__________________________________________________.

But underneath that, it’s really about______________________________.

I have to write this story because I_______________________________.

Set timer and go.

Ali Arje is a journalist and children’s picture book writer. She received her MFA in creative writing from Hofstra University and has blogged for the past dozen years at www.onesanevoice.com.
When creating an illustration, you are laying a foundation for visually communicating an idea. For this demonstration, we are going to use a word prompt from the SCBWI Draw This! competition: “alone.” I decided on a camping theme, where the main character thinks he is alone but is being followed by a bevy of forest creatures. Each line, each mark, tells part of the story you want to convey, and there are techniques that can help you with that goal. I’ve chosen to focus on three elements in my drawing to create a strong composition. They are the ideas of movement, depth, and direction.

Movement brings life to an illustration and prevents it from being flat and uninteresting. In this picture, the animals and boy are in mid-step, frozen in a moment of motion. The main character is actively walking, striding to the bottom corner of the page. Animals are perched, ready to leap, or focused on the action points on the picture. The downward slope of the drawing reinforces this sense of direction and reinforces the movement.
Depth will be achieved by the placement of characters. This develops the relationship between size and distance, which creates the illusion of dimension in your work. The child camper is one of the larger elements on the page, and since he is not obscured, he naturally seems closer than any other elements. The animals overlap one another, reinforcing the size and distance between them. The vanishing point is off the page, to the left, and the field of view heads toward the bottom corner, with all the characters and backgrounds following this path.

Direction helps the eye track the elements in a picture. In a children’s book, the eye should always be directed toward the next page. Children’s books are powered by page turns and the character’s direction determines how fast a reader can get to a page turn. Having the character in the middle of the page will slow the pace of the book. Having them move toward the page border, like the main character in the illustration, points the reader to the next possible illustration in the story.

“Each line, each mark, tells part of the story you want to convey.” --Stephen Ingram
In a standalone illustration, there is a story before your picture and the story will continue after your picture. Your drawing is part of a larger idea, and how you successfully convey that idea depends on the placement of the elements on your page and how you combine them. Your goal it is to draw the reader into your illustration with movement, depth, and direction. These tools will help communicate your vision and strengthen your drawing composition.

Stephen Ingram is an author/illustrator working toward his first picture book. He has always been fascinated with how art can convey both story and emotion in a single picture. A librarian by trade, with degrees in education and art, Stephen works in pen, ink, and watercolor. He is the assistant illustrator coordinator and an active member in the new Long Island SCBWI chapter. http://stepheningram.com/
Finding Your Inspiration by Annina Luck

I love sharing news with you here at the Drafting Table, the illustrator column for the Kid Lit News. First off, here’s to the longer days of summer and may they work their magic on your creativity!

For inspiration to keep drawing, I hope you’ll have already read Stephen Ingram’s article about SCBWI’s “Draw This” illustration challenge. It’s still going strong every month.

For inspiration in the grand sense, as in absorbing the work of a master illustrator, there is a fantastic exhibition at the Morgan Library through October 6, “Drawing the Curtain: Maurice Sendak’s Designs for Opera and Ballet” https://www.themorgan.org/exhibitions/sendak. Sendak made a bequest to the Morgan of over 900 drawings, and this exhibition highlights his successful work as a set and costume designer.

For inspiration from nature, we’re planning a sketchwalk/writerwalk in August at stunning Quail Hill Farm in Amagansett, part of the Peconic Land Trust https://peconiclandtrust.org/our-work/projects/quail-hill-farm.

There are fields, forests, benches, flowers, vegetables, hoop houses, tractors, and chickens
for your sketching, and writing pleasure. I’ll send out a flier soon.

And for inspiration from fellow Long Island illustrators, don’t forget to check out the Long Island Art League https://artleagueli.net/ for workshops as well as local arts councils’ programs. There is also a kidlit illustration workshop beginning at the Mill Pond House, St. James https://www.millspondgallery.org/.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please email me: longislandny-ic@scbwi.org. All my best wishes for an inspiring summer!

Annina Luck is the Long Island Illustrator Coordinator and lives in Huntington Harbor with her husband, Daniel, their cats, Tom and Tux. She especially loves to bring mythology, and Byzantine and Tudor art, and history to life in her picture book and middle-grade projects. She is agented by Essie White of Storm Literary Agency.
Come join us, your Kid Lit Island team, at the Brooklyn Book Fair. The most highly regarded festival in the Tri-State area. You can experience the literary scene, see what’s going on in publishing, and meet authors. The event is free of charge for those who wish to visit and enjoy the BKBF. The bustling atmosphere is inspiring!

We’re offering our PAL and self-published members an opportunity to have a presence for both days. Brooklyn Borough Hall and Vicinity Saturday, September the 21st from 10 am to 4 pm Children’s Day MetroTech Commons, Brooklyn

Sunday, September 22nd from 10 am to 6pm Festival Day & Literary Marketplace

We are also offering three spots free of charge; one, a SCBWI membership—as part of our new Equity & Inclusion Program and two for financial duress. If you would like to be considered, please contact us for further details at longislandny@scbwi.org.

If you would like to participate and sell your books, please register at https://longislandny.scbwi.org/events/brooklyn-book-festival-author-opportunity/.

There are also Bookend events presented citywide. Please check out this link https://brooklynbookfestival.org/. It’s worth the trip!
SCBWI Calendar of Events, Summer 2019

August 9-12
48th Annual Summer Conference, Los Angeles, CA

https://www.scbwi.org/events/48th-annual-summer-conference-in-los-angeles-la19/#event-registration

Sketchwalk/Writerswalk
Quail Hill Farm, Amagansett, NY
Flyer will be sent out soon

September 21-22
Brooklyn Book Festival, Brooklyn, NY

September 21 – Children’s Day 10AM – 4PM Brooklyn Metro Tech Commons
September 22 – Festival Day 10AM – 6PM Brooklyn Borough Hall & Plaza

https://brooklynbookfestival.org/

Check our website, e-mails, and social media platforms for new events and announcements often. Contact us for more about the information above at longislandnyscbwi.org.
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Go Ask Debbie: Debbie Vilardi Drafting Table Calendar: Annina Luck

We’d like to give our heartfelt appreciation and thanks to our PAL member and cover art illustrator, Deborah Cuneo. A humongous amount of gratitude and love to everyone: our writers, our staff, and guests who volunteered and made the fourth edition of Kid Lit News quarterly phenomenal!

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